

Story 1467 (1989 Tape 7)

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Talking Donkey Exposes Adultery

Once in the old days there was a man who became so poor that he finally became a beggar. All he owned was a thin donkey, and he rode that donkey everywhere begging for food and a place to sleep. One day as the sun was setting, he began to search for lodging for the night. He knocked on door after door and asked for a place to sleep that night, but no one would accept him as a guest. He finally went to the door of a large house and took the saddle off his donkey, hoping that he would be accepted there

A woman came out when he knocked on the large door. "Who are you?" she asked. "What are you doing here? Why did you take the saddle from your donkey and leave it on our doorstep?"

The beggar said, "I have come as a guest of Allah."

"I do not accept any guest of Allah whom I do not know.

Very tired, the beggar pleaded, "If you do not accept me as a guest, won't you at least allow me to sleep on the floor in the vestibule just inside the door?"

The lady of the house still did not wish to accept him

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that much. She said, as an excuse, "My husband is not at home." But the beggar looked so pitiable that she finally agreed to let him sleep on the floor in the vestibule.

The beggar said, "I ask for nothing more. I do not ask for food or for a bed. I shall be glad to sleep here on the floor." He lay down there and fell asleep almost immediately.

In the middle of the night, the beggar was awakened by a loud knocking on the front door. When the woman went to the door and admitted the newcomer, the beggar suspected that the man was her lover. When the woman began to cook a very special meal for the newcomer, the beggar no longer had any doubt about the relationship between the two. After the meal had been prepared, the woman and her lover ate for a while and then talked and talked. The beggar then fell asleep again.

About two hours later the beggar was awakened again, this time by the sound of a donkey arriving in the courtyard of the house. He heard the rider say, "Çüş!"¹ and then dismount. When the man entered the vestibule, he saw the beggar and said, "Selamünaleyküm, stranger. Who are you?"

"Aleykümselam."² I am a guest of Allah," said the beggar

¹Expression used to halt a beast of burden, equivalent to the English whoa.

²Selamünaleyküm/Aleykümselam--traditional exchange of greeting between Moslems not well acquainted with each other. It means roughly May peace be unto you/And may peace be unto you, too. If Selamünaleyküm is not responded to, the speaker should be wary of the one so addressed.

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concluding that this must be the owner of the house.

"Oh brother, if you are a guest of Allah, why are you sleeping on the floor in this outer room? Why aren't you sleeping in the guest room?"

Not wishing to create a problem at that moment, the beggar said, "Oh, your wife offered the guest room and some food to me, but I did not take either. I preferred just to sleep here on the floor."

The man of the house invited the guest to eat with him, but the beggar said politely that he was not hungry. Calling his wife, the owner asked, "What food is there for me to eat?"

"Since you were not at home, I didn't bother to cook any regular meal today. I just ate a little yoghurt and some pekmez.³ I can give you some of those dishes, or I can cook some eggs for you."

"Just give me the same things that you ate," answered her husband.

As the owner of the house had just started eating, the beggar went out into the courtyard, put the saddle pad on the back of his donkey, and began to beat it, patır, kütür.⁴

³Grape juice boiled down until it becomes a thick syrup.

⁴Onomatopoeia for a clattering noise.

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When the owner of the house heard this, he stopped eating and went out into the courtyard. Observing what the beggar was doing, he asked, "What is the matter, friend? Why are you beating that poor speechless animal?"

"Aha, you don't know this animal. My donkey's tongue does not know how to remain still. He can never manage to be quiet. He is the main reason that people avoid having me as a guest in their homes."

Even more confused now, the home owner asked, "Is that so? Is it really possible for a donkey to speak? I have never heard of such a thing before."

"Oh, yes! Mine does. Mine does. But don't ask me what he has just been telling me. If I told you, you would probably hear him, too."

Very curious about this, the man said, "Tell me! Tell me! What did he tell you? I want to know."

"All right, then, listen," said the beggar. "He asked me, is it that the owner of this house is eating nothing but yoghurt and pekmez when there are all kinds of cooked foods stored in the kitchen closet? His wife went to a great amount of trouble to prepare all that food."

The husband went back into the house and was astonished to find so much fine food in the kitchen closet. He invited

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the beggar to share this delicious food with him, but again the beggar declined his invitation. Instead of eating, he went out into the courtyard and started beating his donkey again. When the husband heard this, he went out into the courtyard again, and this time he asked, "What is your donkey talking about now?"

"My donkey has just said, 'There is a third man in the house. Go tell the owner of the house that he should invite that third man to eat

In that way they caught the woman's lover and gave him a good beating.